GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:440
ANSWERED ON:26.04.2016
Consumer Redressal
Mahendran Shri C.;Meghwal Shri Arjun Ram ;Natterjee Shri J. Jayasingh Thiyagaraj;Singh Shri Abhishek;Tadas Shri Ramdas Chandrabhanji

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has put in place any mechanism for speedy and inexpensive redressal of consumer complaints;
(b) if so, the details thereof;
(c) whether there is a shortage of judges/staff and other facilities in Consumer Courts leading to delay in disposal of cases beyond the period stipulated in law inviting a critical observation from the Supreme Court;
(d) if so, the details thereof and the response of the Government thereto indicating the number of courts, judges/ members, cases filed, disposed and pending in various courts, State-wise;
(e) the corrective steps taken in this regard; and
(f) whether the Government has launched any consumer awareness campaigns, if so, the details and the outcome thereof ?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
(SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN)

(a) & (b): Yes Madam, Under the provisions of Consumer Protection Act,1986, a three tier quasi-judicial machinery for redressal of consumer complaints − namely, District Consumer Fora in each District, State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission in all State and National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, at the centre has already been established for speedy & inexpensive redressal of consumer Complaints.

(c) & (d): In Civil Appeal No 2740/2007, the Honb'le Supreme Court vide its order dated 14.1.2016 has directed for constitution of a Committee to look into the deficiencies in the functioning of Consumer Fora and to make recommendations for their improvement. The Government has, accordingly, constituted a three member Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Justice Arijit Pasayat, retired Supreme Court Judge.

The details of vacancy position of President and Members in Consumer Fora State-wise is at Annexure I.

The pendency of cases in Consumer Fora State wise is at Annexure II.

(e): The following corrective measures have been taken by the Government in this regard:

(1) State Governments have been requested from time to time to take action well in advance for filling up of vacancies of President and Members and to maintain a panel of candidates for filling up of future vacancies also to avoid delay in appointments.

(2) Circuit Benches from National Commission have been frequently visiting States.

(3) Some State Commissions have constituted Additional Benches mainly to dispose of backlog of pending cases.

(4) The National Commission and some of the State Commissions as well as District Fora are adopting the process of holding Lok Adalats for speedy disposal of the cases.

(5) Financial assistance is provided by the Central Government to the States/UTs for strengthening of infrastructure of Consumer Fora including computerization and networking.

(f): Yes, the Department has launched "Jago Grahak Jago" multimedia consumer awareness campaign. It is carried out on all India basis through various media like Newspapers, Magazines, All India Radio, Doordarshan, Cable and Satellite Channels, Community Radio, Website, SMS, Digital Cinema, Private FM Channels, Interactive Railway Enquiry Service, Bus Panel, Bus Queue Shelter, Display Board at Railway Station/Metro etc. A study carried out in the year 2011 revealed that nearly 91% of the respondents were aware of the campaign.

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